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Regional Cricket Identities: The development of cricket and identity in Yorkshire and Surrey

Richard Holt in his book *Sport and the British* describes Herbert Sutcliffe of Yorkshire and Jack Hobbs of Surrey opening the batting for England thus: “They were a pair whose virtues of northern *grit* and southern *grace* seemed to combine the perceived characteristic regional virtues of the English perfectly”. What were the factors that combined to form these regionalised cricket ‘virtues’, and how did they persist in the regional, national, and indeed international consciousness?



The North



V



The South



“To contemplate Arthur Mitchell in the acquisition of an *unsmiling, purposeful* century, is to appreciate the *hard, unyielding* Yorkshire hills”. Yorkshire journalist J. M. Kilburn linking place, identity and cricket.

“In the man himself there lies the *casual* air of a southerner; no visible hatred of a batsman as bred... in a Trueman”. *Wisden* contributor Alan Ross on the Yorkshire born Surrey player Jim Laker.

The above, although just one aspect of my thesis, are examples that demonstrate the distinctive character of the narratives associated with cricket, and how they present region, identity and class. The thesis will use an analysis of these narratives and their sources (class groups) to discover how they have affected regional cricket supporters and influenced the values and meanings that they attribute to the game. It is hypothesised, in light of the data below, that regional meanings of cricket are hegemonically produced via these narratives, and the social groups who had influence over cricket provision.

The meaning of cricket to Surrey and Yorkshire respondents’.



This hypothesis is based upon data collected in a survey of 400 supporters, of which two sets of data are illustrated (Yorkshire in white, Surrey in Brown).

All I need now are the keys to my time machine!

“I am proud of where I come from regionally”.

